United Nations S/PV.7167

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7167th meeting
Friday, 2 May 2014, noon
New York

President:	Mr. Oh Joon/Ms. Paik Ji-ah	(Republic of Korea)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Mr. Quinlan
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

14-31939 (E)

Accessible docume.nt Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 12.10 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council in the month of May 2014, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to Her Excellency Mrs. U. Joy Ogwu, Permanent Representative of Nigeria, for her service as President of the Council during the month of April. I am sure that I speak for all members of the Council when I express my deep appreciation to Ambassador Ogwu and her team for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda.

The agenda was adopted

Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Ukraine to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Jeffrey Feltman.

Mr. Feltman: Since we last met to discuss Ukraine (S/PV.7165), on Tuesday, 29 April, although a number of areas in the country remain calm, we have seen a further severe deterioration of the situation in parts of eastern and southern Ukraine. Recent developments in those areas threaten a further destabilization of the country and the region, as well as the unity of Ukraine itself.

In more than a dozen cities in Donetsk oblast and Luhansk, an increasing number of buildings are being held by armed groups. Of most immediate concern is the situation in the eastern city of Sloviansk. That city of 125,000 people in Donetsk oblast has been occupied by armed insurgents since 12 April. According to Ukraine's Ministry of Defence, during the ongoing operations by the authorities two helicopters were shot down overnight, with at least one pilot killed. A number of other casualties have also been reported on the ground on both sides. The total number cannot be completely verified at this stage. The acting Minister of the Interior has stated that a number of roadblocks around the city have been removed, but from the media we understand that tense standoffs continue in parts of and around the city.

At the same time, the seven military monitors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and accompanying Ukrainian military staff being held by gunmen in Sloviansk remain in detention, despite repeated calls for their release. To that end, we understand that Russian President Putin dispatched a special presidential envoy to assist in the freeing of the hostages. I reiterate the Secretary-General's call to those responsible for their abduction to release them immediately, unconditionally and unharmed.

The crisis has also escalated in the Donetsk oblast and in Donetsk itself, where yesterday, on 1 May, self-declared separatists seized the regional prosecutor's office. There have also been reports that the Ukrainian authorities have banned Russian passenger airplanes from flying to Donetsk and Kharkiv. We have also read reports of clashes during a pro-unity demonstration in the southern city of Odessa.

I would like to share with the Council key elements of the Secretary-General's statement that is being issued at the same time that we are meeting:

> "The Secretary-General reiterates his grave concern over the deteriorating situation in regions of east and south Ukraine. Escalating violence and reported further loss of life in the city of Sloviansk today is a stark reminder of how dangerous the situation has become. Expansion of militia activities and ongoing seizures of public buildings by unidentified armed groups undercut the letter and spirit of the 17 April Geneva statement. He therefore urges all sides to exercise maximum restraint and appeals to those with grievances to voice them peacefully, so as to avoid more bloodshed. He calls for all parties to respect fully Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.
>
> "The Secretary-General once again calls on those responsible for the capture and detention of OSCE military monitors and accompanying

Ukrainian staff to release them immediately, unconditionally and unharmed.

"The Secretary-General stresses that a diplomatic solution is the only way out of this crisis and that all sides must redouble their efforts to revive the spirit of compromise displayed during the 17 April Geneva talks."

Finally, as I informed the Council in my last briefing, given the deteriorating situation in the country, the Secretary-General has asked me to go back to Kyiv next week. I will also be going to Moscow. In both cities, I will continue to reiterate the Secretary-General's message of restraint and immediate return to dialogue, including direct and constructive dialogue between Moscow and Kyiv.

The President: I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation called for today's emergency meeting of the Security Council with a view to considering the resumed punitive military operations undertaken by the authorities of the Kyiv regime, involving terrorists, the pro-fascist Right Sector and other ultranationalist organizations against their own people in south-eastern Ukraine. A sub-unit of the Ukrainian army is using tanks, other heavy artillery and military helicopters to launch rocket strikes against protesters and land troops. The first blood has already been spilled and reports are coming in about the killed and wounded. If the criminal misadventures of the Kyiv clique are not swiftly stopped, a catastrophic outcome for Ukraine cannot be averted. We have warned of this on many occasions.

Punitive measures against its own people bear witness to the current Kyiv Government's inability or unwillingness to fulfil its obligations under the Geneva declaration of 17 April to ensure a speedy end to all violence and the launch of broad national dialogue, with the participation of all regions and political forces. If anyone entertained any doubts, it is now clear that the many statements of the so-called Government of Ukraine regarding its intention to begin nationwide dialogue in the search of settlement to the far-reaching crisis are nothing but hypocrisy. The regime in Kyiv, having abrogated the agreement of 21 February, is now openly violating its commitments under the Geneva declaration of 17 April, which require an urgent measures to end to all violence.

In essence, at a time when Russia is striving to de-escalate and settle the crisis and — at the request of our Western partners and in cooperation with the leadership of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) — recently sent a representative of the President of the Russian Federation to Donetsk oblast in order to find a solution to the situation of the military specialists from several European countries, the Kyiv regime, with the support of its Western sponsors, has launched the full-scale use of military force, effectively annihilating any prospects for the implementation of the Geneva agreement.

We are particularly concerned about information that, in the course of the punitive operations undertaken by the Ukrainian armed forces and illegal ultranationalist groups, English has been heard being spoken on the radio and English-speaking foreigners have been identified among those attacking in Sloviansk. We insist that all outside interference in the events in Ukraine is unacceptable. It is time for our Western colleagues to think twice, reason with their mentees in Ukraine, and stop toying with the destiny of the Ukrainian people to determine their own geopolitical goals.

How else can we interpret yet another blatant example of the double standards wielded by the United States? Following the numerous attempts of Washington, D.C., to tell Russia where and how its military should be properly deployed in its own territory, the White House has now been offended by our appeal to the Kyiv Government to withdraw its forces from eastern Ukraine. I recall that Washington, D.C., used frequently to ask former President Yanukovich of Ukraine not to use force against his people, and threatened him with all sorts of consequences. Now, however, in a strange twist of logic, force may and must be used against civilians by a Government that enjoys no legitimacy.

The High Representative of the European Union is not far behind her United States colleagues, philosophizing about the State's monopoly on the use of force. In the current context in Ukraine, her statement can only be characterized as provocative and inflammatory. It would seem that not only did the High Representative not participate in signing the Geneva declaration, but that she did not read it. In helping those who organized the coup d'état in Kyiv to crush the

protesters, the United States and the European Union bear great responsibility for effectively destroying the path to a peaceful solution to the crisis.

Against that backdrop, the categorical refusal of Washington, D.C., to support the continuation of dialogue between the representatives of Kyiv and of south-eastern Ukraine, under the auspices of the OSCE, would hardly seem coincidental in its contravention of the Geneva declaration fo 17 April. What could be a more striking example than the fact that the United States is bent on the use of force? We call on Kyiv, its enablers and the signers of the Geneva declaration, the United States and the European Union, not to commit a fatal error and to make a sober assessment at all possible consequences of their actions. We call firmly on the West to end its destructive policy concerning Ukraine, and on the self-proclaimed authorities in Kyiv to swiftly halt all punitive operations and other measures against the people, free political prisoners and guarantee full freedom for journalists. That would represent a genuine process of de-escalation.

There is a need for the urgent organization of authentic and equitable political dialogue, with the participation of all regions, to reach mutual agreement on the future of the country, rather than pretend to draft reforms within the small circle of self-styled Government of winners. Those who gave the criminal order to unleash bloodshed will bear full responsibility for whatever happens in Ukraine.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I pay tribute to the Permanent Representative of Nigeria and her team in their presidency of the Council for last month.

Here we are once again, meeting to address the crisis in Ukraine. Each time, the Council flaunts its divisions and hence its powerlessness while that unhappy country sinks into anarchy.

Let us return to the facts. In eastern Ukraine, armed groups are gradually seizing the cities. They enjoy no crowds of supporters other than a few hundred demonstrators. Their heavy weaponry disqualigies them as mere sympathetic activists. Russian officers strut on local television. Observers of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and jouralists have been taken hostage. Numerous people have been detained; more seriously, increasingly credible allegations are surfacing of enforced disappearances, killings and torture. These thugs have refused to implement the Geneva agreement that was intended to restore the Ukrainian State on its territory.

What has Ukraine done? After showing a restraint that no other State would have exhbited in the presence of these attacks on its authority — attacks that have been organized, supported and justified by a neighbour — it decided to use its army and police against the armed gangs spreading a sense of insecurity at the expense of people most of whom do not support them. These gangs have so little in common with the spontaneous coelescence of local groups that they were able to shoot down a helicopter with a surface-to-air missile — which, it must be acknowledged, is not commonly found at the Kharkiv market.

By what right would anyone meddle in the internal affairs of a State that is only seeking to restore its violated sovereignty? At the bilateral level, we can recall the need to act with restraint, but so far there is no evidence that it has not done so. Going any further would be to violate the Charter of the United Nations. I know that reality has left that scenario far behind. Having trampled the principle of the territorial integrity of States, the same can be done to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. After all, in sin, it is only the first step that bears a cost, as the moralists say.

Russia has proven that by renouncing, one after the other, the principles underlying international life. But it still has a few regrets as it spirals downwards, so it tries, against all credibility, to blame the other. It invokes the agreement of 21 February, which it did not endorse and discovered only when it was too late. It brandishes the Geneva agreement, for the achievement of which it made no effort. Lastly, it makes accusations that would be comical under different circumstances: the Nazis are in Kyiv, English speakers have infiltrated the ranks of Ukrainians — which makes me jealous that no French speakers are included — and, finally, the European Union is responsible for the violence.

No, the facts are much more simple. In reality, Russia has opened a Pandora's box. They have let the demon of nationalism escape. They have unleashed bands of thugs on Ukraine. The only alternatives they are offering Kyiv are capitulation or partition — and they are suddenly discovering that this mixture can go completely out of control; that nationalism can oblige them to do what they do not want to do; that the thugs act like thugs and, finally, that Ukraine, faced with the

impossible choice they wish to impose on it, can hit back. At that point, the fire-starting firefighters shriek loudly to try to make us forget that in fact it was them who chose this road, and that it is Russia who should retreat.

For our part, we have been saying for weeks that we are seeking a de-escalation — we want a de-escalation. But de-escalation implies that Russia will calm the armed groups it is equipping and training; that it will see that the OSCE observers are freed — having still not publicly condemned their capture in the first place — and open negotiations with Ukraine; that free elections will be held on 25 May under international supervision in order to give the Kyiv authorities indisputable legitimacy; and that negotiations begin between Russia and Ukraine. Compromises are possible. Ukraine is aware of the stakes and is ready, and the countries of Europe, the most closely concerned in this crisis, are too. Constitutional reform that responds to the concerns of the people of eastern Ukraine and respects Ukraine's sovereignty is quite conceivable. But for that to happen, we have to put an end to this bad spy thriller, in which the Minister for Foreign Affairs is replaced by an information service when a crisis has to be resolved. What we need today is not a vodka-loving James Bond but diplomats who can return to the principles that form the foundations of international life.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I congratulate the Republic of Korea on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. I would also like to thank Ambassador Ogwu and the Nigerian team for their admirable stewardship of the Council in April.

Thank you for convening this meeting, Mr. President. The Russian Federation has described this morning's events in eastern Ukraine as a punitive military operation against peaceful activists. This is yet again a gross distortion of the facts. The Ukrainian Government has the right, and indeed the responsibility, to uphold the rule of law and protect its citizens in its own territory. Of course, in doing so it should at all times act in a proportionate and measured way. The actions undertaken this morning by Ukrainian security forces in and around Sloviansk appear to have been just that, in an effort to relieve the city from the armed groups, sponsored and controlled by Russia, that have been terrorizing the local population. We urge them to continue to make every effort to ensure that the risks to civilians are minimized.

But let us be absolutely clear. There is no Council member sitting around this table that would allow its towns to be overrun by armed militants. None of us would abrogate responsibility for the protection of citizens on our own territory who are being intimidated and brutalized by heavily armed groups backed by a neighbouring country. Proportionate is not the same as passive. The scale of Russian hypocrisy is breathtaking. Russia stoutly supports, and indeed arms, the most repressive regimes in the world, notably Syria, a regime that brutally represses dissent without any sense of restraint or concern for the protection of civilians. Russia's synthetic indignation over Ukraine's proportionate and measured actions convinces no one. Russian claims that these are peaceful activists are simply not credible. Peaceful activists do not have the means or the capability to shoot down three Ukrainian military helicopters, reportedly using man-portable air defence systems. The use of such sophisticated weaponry against Ukrainian forces reaffirms our assessment that the armed groups in eastern Ukraine include professionals funded, equipped and directed by Russia.

The situation in eastern Ukraine has continued to deteriorate. Armed groups stormed the Prosecutor's office in Donetsk yesterday, further increasing the number of Government buildings occupied since the 17 April Geneva agreement. We remain seriously concerned about the kidnapping and continued detention of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Vienna Document inspectors, and call on Russia to condemn this criminal act and use its influence over those who are holding the inspectors to bring about their immediate, safe and unconditional release. We are deeply disturbed by the reports of abductions and intimidation of journalists reporting from eastern Ukraine. The Council discussed the protection of journalists in an open debate last year (see S/PV.7003). One of its clearest conclusions was on the central importance of safeguarding a free media so that facts and truth can be told. Instead, what we are seeing in Ukraine is a torrent of disinformation and propaganda.

Three days ago, all the members of the Council emphasized the importance of the 17 April agreement and its implementation (see S/PV.7165). Abiding by that agreement remains the best way to de-escalate the volatile and dangerous situation in eastern Ukraine. It is therefore regrettable that Russia's presidential

press secretary said this morning that Russia did not think it any longer possible to implement the 17 April agreement. Worsening instability in Ukraine is in no one's long-term interest. We urge Russia to step back from such rhetoric, to desist from its inflammatory propaganda and to commit to de-escalating a perilous situation. We urge Russia to throw its full weight behind the 17 April agreement and rein in the militant armed groups that it supports and that are responsible for the current crisis.

Ms. Power (United States of America): In recent months, the Council has met more than a dozen times regarding the situation in Ukraine. Time and again, we have urged for respect for Ukraine's territorial integrity, adherence to international law, and steps to reduce tensions and de-escalate the crisis. Just this Tuesday, we met to discuss Russia's inexcusable failure to fulfil its obligations under the 17 April Geneva agreement (see S/PV.7165).

Russia is pushing two monumental falsehoods right now. The first falsehood is that the Ukrainians are carrying out a large-scale, uncontrolled, violent attack on unarmed civilians. That is false. The Ukrainian Government is carrying out a targeted effort to contain Russian-sponsored paramilitary violence emanating from Sloviansk, in an effort to deliver security for Ukrainian citizens. There is horrible violence in eastern Ukraine, and that violence is coming, as it has been for weeks now, from Russian-directed agents and paramilitaries and their associates. The second monumental falsehood is that the Russian Federation is deeply concerned about the instability in the east. The rest of us are deeply and sincerely concerned by that instability. But despite all its rhetoric, Russia cannot be, because Russia is causing the instability. This expressed concern is cynical and disingenuous, and meant only to distract us from the reality that is playing out before our eyes.

Today I want to focus on one main point. From the outset, the Government of Ukraine has sought to resolve all issues peacefully through dialogue, both internally and with the Russian Federation. This policy of restraint continued even after Russia subverted Crimea, orchestrated an undemocratic separatist vote in Crimea, invaded Crimea and announced to the world that it had annexed Crimea — while lying about its intentions and even its presence in Crimea every step of the way. As its country has been carved up, as foreign operatives have moved into its homeland, as masses of Russian troops have assembled along its eastern border, and as Moscow has continued to threaten its territorial integrity and its people, Ukraine has continuously, day after day, shown remarkable, almost unimaginable, restraint. It has done as the Council has asked. It has implemented its international agreements. It has refrained from military responses to aggression, even as Russia proudly announced that it had annexed part of Ukraine. Ukraine has over and over again committed and recommitted itself to direct dialogue with Moscow. And yet, in return for Ukraine's reasonableness, Russia has destabilized, threatened and terrorized.

In past weeks, the same scenario that played itself out in Crimea has been repeating itself in parts of eastern Ukraine: the same sudden appearance of unfamiliar men and new armaments; the same strategy of occupying buildings and taking control of the media; the same vicious propaganda directed against the Government of Ukraine and the same denials of Russian involvement; and the same cries of outrage whenever Ukraine takes a step to assert its own rights, enforce its own laws, protect its own citizens and restore order on its own territory.

The Ukrainian people and Government have embarked on an effort today to reclaim one city in the eastern part of their country. Their response is reasonable, it is proportional and, frankly, it is what any one of our countries would have done in the face of that threat.

Imagine for a moment if 26,000 square kilometres of Russian territory were seized by another country. Would Moscow show restraint, week after week, day after day, in the hopes that rational dialogue rather than brute force would prevail? How would President Putin respond, if parts of his country were seized, to requests to remove his army from those parts of the country? Seriously, there is some irony in Russian demands, given the manner in which it would deal with separatism within its borders.

It has been 63 days since Russia began its campaign to annex Crimea, and for 63 days, day after day, the Ukrainian Government has chosen peace. Yet in those same 63 days, Russia, day after day, has chosen to pursue more territory.

Consider the following facts. Pro-Russian separatists have seized the Donetsk railway control centre and stopped almost all train movements. That is an illegal act. Separatists seized control of the Donetsk

General Prosecutor's office, in a violent clash that left more than two dozen people hospitalized. That is an illegal act. Separatists seized the General Prosecutor's office in Horlivka. That is an illegal act. Pro-Russian activists beat up two Radio Svoboda journalists who were filming a protest near the Kharkiv regional administration building on 1 May. That is an illegal act. We could go on and on and on and on about the illegal acts.

All told, in 17 towns in eastern Ukraine 32 buildings are under occupation, 21 by armed personnel. In addition, we have seen dozens of Ukrainian public officials illegally detained, three bodies pulled from a river near Donetsk and a group of eight, now seven, monitors of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) abducted, in direct defiance not simply of Ukraine's Government but of the Council and the world community.

Alongside all of that action, we have heard the Russian Federation building its case for intervention — outright intervention — including President Putin saying that eastern Ukrainian cities and Odessa were not even part of Ukraine in the "good old days", harkening back to the glory of Novorossiysk. And Ambassador Churkin has taken the United Nations Charter's name in vein by invoking Article 51 in self-defence, as activated during the Russian takeover of parts of Georgia and relevant here in the context of the crisis in eastern Ukraine. The country that has a right of self-defence, Ambassador Churkin, is Ukraine.

Russia's military intervention in Ukraine is a clear violation of international law, and Russia fools no one by calling its troops "peacekeepers". Unfortunately, Russia does have a track record of using the term "peacekeeping" as cover for unlawful military intervention and occupation without authorization from the Security Council. There is no evidence that the Ukrainian Government has targeted Russian nationals or threatened Russia in any way, in stark contrast to the ongoing Russian actions to destabilize eastern Ukraine. If Russia thinks peacekeeping forces are required in Ukraine, it should come to the Security Council and seek United Nations peacekeepers.

Those separatists are not engaged in peaceful protest on behalf of their rights. Their rights are not being threatened. Their ability to use their language and have it recognized by the Government is not being threatened. Their ability to participate fully as voters and citizens is not being threatened. It is their methods that have been intentionally provocative and threatening. The separatists are not pressing their case peacefully. They are using baseball bats, metal bars, clubs and knives. Those are not activists, they are armed operatives. It must stop.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the Ukrainian Government has acted in good faith and with admirable restraint. The area around Kyiv City Hall is now clear of all Maidan barricades and protesters. Over the Easter holiday, Ukraine voluntarily suspended its counter-terrorism initiative, choosing to de-escalate, despite its fundamental right to provide security on its own territory and for its own people. Even today, as a it tries to lawfully restore order, Ukrainian security forces are operating in a cautious and restrained manner. Unlike the separatists, Ukraine has cooperated fully with the OSCE special monitoring mission and allowed its observers to operate in regions about which Moscow had voiced concerns regarding the treatment of ethnic Russians. In addition, Prime Minister Yatsenyuk has publicly committed his Government to undertake far-reaching constitutional reforms that will strengthen the power of the regions. He has appealed personally to Russian-speaking Ukrainians, pledging to support a special status for the Russian language and to protect those who use it. He announced legislation to grant amnesty to those who surrendered arms.

The fact that Ukraine has now taken some steps to try to restore order is to be expected. It is justified. It is what each and every one of the States we represent would do in a similar situation, and would probably have done far earlier. The fact that Russia has chosen to call an emergency meeting in protest is yet another indication that the authorities in Moscow either underestimate the intelligence of the world community or that they are trying to exactly replicate in eastern Ukraine the charade that they were responsible for in Crimea. We are outraged by that prospect, but we are not fooled.

Just as Russia and its pro-Russian militia allies engage in a dramatic and dangerous campaign in eastern Ukraine, the Russian Government is spreading some of its most wild propaganda and fantasy stories since the beginning of the crisis. Over the course of the aggression, some of those entrusted with carrying out the functions of the municipal Government and those reporting impartially on the facts have begun to slowly disappear. Local council members, local police

and journalists are missing and being held by armed operatives. International observers from the Vienna Document observation team, as the Council knows, are being held in hostage. Those who have an interest and a mandate to report on the truth are being silenced, and that silence is being filled with relentless Russian propaganda and fiction that, it seems, they hope will justify whatever actions they decide to take.

Today's Russian Foreign Ministry ridiculous and false statement purporting Western intervention would not be so alarming if it did not suggest that Moscow is looking for nothing short of a pretext to invade. Russia may have the power to instigate fear, to spread lies and to sow discord, violence and disarray across its border. It may even have the power to abuse its veto at the Security Council. But, as we have said in the Chamber before, it cannot veto the truth.

These are dangerous days for Ukraine and for all of us. If there is hope to de-escalate, Russia must pull back its troops from the eastern border of Ukraine, it must cease its campaign of instability inside of Ukraine, and it must work to release the international observers and journalists who have been taken by armed men working on behalf of Moscow's agenda.

Over the past 63 days, in the face of aggression and annexation, the Council implored the Ukrainians to demonstrate restraint, and they heeded our call. We also asked Russia to stop invading its neighbour. Sadly, it did not. For that, Russia must be held accountable.

In conclusion, I reiterate the support of my Government for the principles of the United Nations Charter. We continue to support the scheduled 25 May elections, which will enable the people of Ukraine to choose their leaders freely and fairly. We continue to seek a peaceful, democratic, inclusive and united Ukraine. We remain committed to a diplomatic process.

Finally and most urgently, we call on Russia to cease its provocative acts and to fulfil the Geneva commitments from which it has walked away.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, for his briefing.

The situation in eastern Ukraine is deteriorating in a worrying manner. Everything must be done so that it does not degenerate into an open conflict with incalculable consequences for international peace and security.

We are deeply concerned by the actions of pro-Russian militias separatists supported by Russia, who are clearly trying to destabilize the east of Ukraine and to prevent the holding of presidential elections on 25 May.

Faced with violations of its sovereignty and territorial integrity for two months now, the Ukrainian authorities have demonstrated restraint. They did not respond militarily to the occupation or annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. Until now, the Ukrainian authorities have shown the greatest of restraint in responding to the proliferation of cases of illegal occupation of public buildings by armed militias, the growing number of attacks against Ukrainian security forces and the surge in violence against those demonstrating peacefully in favour of the unity of Ukraine in the east of the country.

We deeply regret that the confrontations today near Sloviansk and during the demonstrations in Odessa have led to deaths and scores of injured, according to media reports. We reiterate our call for the de-escalation of tensions and for restraint on all sides, fully in keeping with the joint statement adopted on 17 April in Geneva by the chief diplomats of Ukraine, Russia, the United States and the European Union. This is no time to tear up that agreement, but to uphold it. The loss of human life over the past few hours could have been avoided if all parties involved had done the necessary to implement the Geneva statement.

As we meet here, the situation on the ground is chaotic. The presence throughout the territory of Ukraine of impartial observers from the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is crucial for establishing the facts and defusing the war-mongering propaganda. Neutral monitoring and reporting of the facts will help create the conditions to de-escalate this dangerous situation. The OSCE special monitoring mission must be able to fully carry out its work to support the de-escalation measures set out in the Geneva statement.

The safety of the international observers deployed across Ukraine must be guaranteed by all of the parties. We take this opportunity to reiterate our strong condemnation of the kidnapping of a team of military inspectors deployed under the OSCE 2011 Vienna Document. We reiterate our call on Russia to continue using all of its influence on the pro-Russian separatists to free, unconditionally and without delay, the seven

monitors from OSCE participating States, whom they have been detaining in Sloviansk for one week now, as well as the Ukrainian personnel accompanying them.

Luxembourg continues to believe that a peaceful way out of this crisis can be found. Nothing can replace direct substantive dialogue between Kyiv and Moscow to find a diplomatic solution to the Ukrainian crisis. For that dialogue to take place, we must urgently proceed to the de-escalation of tensions. We hope that Mr. Feltman's upcoming visit to Moscow and Kyiv will contribute to that. The good offices of the United Nations are needed now more than ever.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I join other speakers in expressing my confidence, on behalf of the delegation of Argentina, in Korea's leadership during the month of its presidency. I also express my recognition and gratitude to the Nigerian presidency of last month.I also thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Feltman, for his briefing on the situation in Ukraine.

We are meeting for the second time this week to discuss once again the alarming situation in Ukraine, showing that the Security Council has a responsibility to express — and for Argentina, to reiterate — its concern that wide-scale violent confrontations could result from the growing tensions. The alarming reports coming from Solviansk suggest that such confrontations have occurred and that there is a serious risk of entering into a spiral of violence with grave consequences for Ukraine, the region and the international community.

Argentina condemns the acts of violence reported in eastern Ukraine that have claimed human lives. Unfortunately, the calls by the members of the Council, the Secretary-General and the international community on all parties to seek to calm the situation, exhibit the greatest of self-control and to contribute to constructive dialogue have not been heeded. The spirit compromise shown in Geneva has deteriorated rapidly and must be recovered in order to find a political and diplomatic solution to the crisis.

It must be made clear to all parties that a peaceful solution to the difficult situation in Ukraine cannot be achieved through unilateral acts of any sort. It is particularly crucial that all parties fully respect human rights law and international humanitarian law, respect the rights of all minorities and ensure that all actions are strictly within international law.

The only solution that Argentina, like the rest of the international community, considers desirable and necessary is that reached through an inclusive national dialogue with the participation of all of the parties involved. However, to launch such a dialogue process and move towards a solution, it is crucial to create conditions conducive to negotiation, build confidence among the various communities and provide assurances to all Ukrainians throughout Ukraine that their main concerns will be addressed, with full respect for Ukraine's right to see to its internal affairs.

We have witnessed further confrontational rhetoric once again, speeches fomenting hate, discrimination, hostility and violence, and actions that serve only to escalate the already highly volatile situation. All of this seriously undermines any effort by the international community to encourage the parties to enter into constructive dialogue towards a peaceful politico-diplomatic solution to the crisis.

It is therefore crucial that the most influential actors engage in constructive diplomacy, refrain from confrontational rhetoric and use their influence on the parties for progress in the effective implementation of the measures agreed on 17 April in Geneva. Those measures are necessary, indeed indispensable, for de-escalating tensions and finding a way out of the crisis.

Finally, human lives are at stake and regional stability is at risk. Respect for the founding principles of the Charter of the United Nations must be ensured, including the universal principles of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Ukraine. The Security Council has met several times in a short period to address this situation, but we have not manifested the capacity to play a constructive role to find a way out of the crisis. Members' calls to de-escalate tensions, exercise restraint and pursue dialogue have no effect because they are not coherent. We have not been able to send out a message in a single voice or to take any sort of action. But it is not too late. The worst can still be averted. Perhaps the Council will — it should — be able to send the same message today as the one the Secretary-General made today, in the same terms, in the same spirit and with the same convictions, that is, that we must assume our responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): When we met on 29 April on the situation in Ukraine (see S/PV.7165), we urged Russia to abide by the commitments it made in Geneva on 17 April, including to refrain from violence, intimidation and provocative actions. Since then, as Under-Secretary-General Feltman has just told us, the situation has further deteriorated severely. This planned and coordinated destabilization could not happen without external support. The shooting down of Ukrainian helicopters in Sloviansk today by surface-to-air missiles is dramatic further evidence of that. We are witnessing well-armed, well-trained personnel, using military weapons, who are intent on armed provocation. We have seen further takeover and consolidation of control by armed militia groups over key facilities in cities and towns right across eastern Ukraine, including Donetsk, Kharkiv, Mariupol, Sloviansk and Holivka. Orchestrated violence has today spread to Odessa.

Journalists in eastern Ukraine have been detained. There are kidnappings and torture. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe observers, detained on 25 April, are still being held hostage a week later. That is an affront to the entire international community, and they must be released immediately.

Those actions by pro-Russian groups are clearly not a legitimate protest or an attempt to protect Russian speakers from alleged or spurious threats. They are calculated, cynical and highly provocative actions, obviously designed to undermine Ukrainian State authority, to intimidate and de-stabilize. They make a mockery of what Russia has committed to in the Geneva agreement.

Ukraine itself is working to implement its Geneva commitments. It has submitted to Parliament a draft law and amnesty for protesters who surrender their weapons. It has initiated a process of constitutional reform aimed at decentralizing power. It has committed to holding a broad public debate on possible constitutional change. However, in response to the extreme provocation that Ukraine is facing, Ukrainian authorities have the right and responsibility to seek to reinstate State authority and restore public order over all their territory.

Ukrainian authorities have given clear messages to militant groups as to what is required of them, as Interior Minister Avakov has said: "Free the hostages. Lay down weapons. Vacate administrative buildings, and get municipal infrastructure back to normal". That has not happened. In these circumstances, it is appropriate and necessary for the Ukrainian Government to take measures to try to ensure security and protect its own citizens in its own territory.

We have seen a statement from Russia's Foreign Ministry earlier today describing — hypocritically, shamelessly — the policy of those who have supported Ukraine as "destructive". But what is destructive is Russia's reckless interference in its neighbour's affairs — destructive of Ukraine's stability and territorial integrity, destructive of the Geneva agreement, destructive of regional security, destructive of the Charter of the United Nations and the laws governing relations between countries and destructive of Russia's own standing and credibility.

We are at a very dangerous, manipulated moment, and Russia must immediately de-escalate the situation, ensure that militia groups desist in their armed rebellion, implement the Geneva agreement and demonstrate, as President Putin has claimed, that it has no further territorial ambitions on Ukraine. That certainly does not appear to be the case.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to congratulate the Republic of Korea on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to express appreciation to the Ambassador of Nigeria and her team for their outstanding leadership of the work of the Council last month. I also wish to thank Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Feltman for his briefing.

In recent days, the situation in some areas in south-eastern Ukraine has been characterized by ongoing tensions and escalation that have resulted in casualties. That is a matter of deep concern to China. China has indicated on many occasions its principled position on the question of Ukraine. We hope that the parties concerned will proceed from the need to safeguard the fundamental interests of various ethnic groups in Ukraine, maintain regional peace and stability, keep calm, exercise restraint and avoid further deterioration of the situation.

A political solution is the only way out of the crisis in Ukraine. A fundamental settlement to the crisis in Ukraine needs to take into consideration the history and the reality, and accommodate the legitimate rights, interests and aspirations of various regions and ethnic groups within Ukraine, as well as the legitimate concerns of all parties, so as to achieve a balance of their interests.

For some time, various parties, including China, have worked actively to promote peace and facilitate negotiations. The four-party talks in Geneva among the Russian Federation, the United States, the European Union and Ukraine agreed on the need to take measures to de-escalate the situation in Ukraine. We hope that the parties concerned will stick to dialogue and consultations, effectively implement the agreements reached, forcefully promote the process of political settlement and achieve stability and development in Ukraine as soon as possible.

China calls on all parties to seek a political settlement to the question of Ukraine through dialogue, not confrontation. We will continue to support international good offices that will help to de-escalate the situation and promote a political settlement.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your accession to the presidency of the Council, and I wish you and your entire team every success in your endeavours. I would also like to pay tribute to Mrs. Joy Ogwu and her team for Nigeria's excellent stewardship of the Council last month. I would also like to thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

Despite repeated calls for restraint and for calm, Chad notes with great concern that the situation in eastern Ukraine continues to deteriorate politically and in terms of security and runs the risk of degenerating into a war with incalculable consequences. A number of missions, attempts at arbitration, mediation and other efforts have been undertaken to contribute to de-escalating the situation and to opening the way to dialogue. The results, however, have fallen far short of expectations.

Chad condemns the most recent acts of violence in eastern Ukraine, which have led to a number of deaths and significant material damage. Given the grave situation, Chad reiterates its call for an immediate halt to the fighting and for adherence to non-violence, both by Government forces and the separatists. We also launch an appeal for the release of the seven observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe still being held in detention. We remain convinced that a solution to the Ukrainian problem is necessarily a political. It must be sought in full respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and unity of Ukraine and in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations.

Chad also reiterates its call for calm, restraint and a de-escalation of the situation. We call on the countries with influence on the parties to use all means possible to establish direct dialogue between the parties. With that in mind, we encourage the international community, especially the Secretary-General, to redouble efforts to bring about a rapprochement between the parties in order to find a peaceful solution to the Ukrainian crisis.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): Let me start by congratulating the Korean delegation on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. I wish you every success during your tenure, Madam. I would also like to express my delegation's appreciation and gratitude to the outgoing presidency of Nigeria for its wise stewardship of the Council during the month of April. I would also like to thank Mr. Jeffrey Feltman for his brief but troubling information.

I would like to return to a question that has been already raised: What would a country do if a group of people in one of its towns decided to break away and declare themselves above the country's laws and Constitution, arm themselves illegally and attack local Government, administrative and justice buildings and take hostages and practice enforced disappearances, beatings and killings? If such groups were supported by sponsors from abroad and propped up by massive propaganda campaigns demonizing the people and the Government, and if provocations were expanding into other regions of one's country, would one sit and wait for the country to be decimated, or would one act in the country's interest, protecting its sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity?

Ukraine has taken belated and highly cautious actions against those who are determined to carve it up and parcel it out. Like any other State represented in this Chamber, it has the right to protect its unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity by all means necessary.

As far as punitive actions go, let us be frank. There were more victims on Thursday in Aleppo after a market bombing by barrel bombs: at least 33 people were killed and many more were wounded. That took place a day after a barrel bomb was dropped by a Government aircraft on an elementary school in another part of the city, killing at least 20 other people, including 17 children. Russia has so far not condemned that punitive act by the Al-Assad regime, like countless

similar acts by the regime in the course of more then three years of ongoing war in that country.

Today in eastern Ukraine, two Ukrainian helicopters were shot down by mobile air defence systems, killing two military officers and injuring seven others. Another army helicopter was also damaged. Militants used grenade launchers and portable air defence systems. Peaceful protesters do not use grenade launchers that can shoot down helicopters, or perhaps planes at some time in the future. Peaceful protesters do not take their morning walks armed with heavy weapons and automatic weapons. They do not kidnap and shamelessly parade international observers. Today provocations and instigations are being carried out in yet another city in Ukraine, as our Australian colleague has mentioned, and there have now been deaths in Odessa.

Had the separatists respected and carried out the Geneva statement, had they not taken up arms against their own State in the first place, none of that would be happening. It would not be happening had Russia, the only Power with real influence on the separatists, denounced such acts of aggression and called on the separatists to accept a peaceful path of talks with the central Government. Instead, Russia chose to continue to put the blame on Ukraine, the only side that is actually taking some steps — at gunpoint — to implement the Geneva statement.

In addition to the various initiatives that were referred to a couple of days ago during the Council's open briefing (see S/PV.7165) — an amnesty law, a limitation of presidential powers, decentralization — Ukraine's Prime Minister, Arseniy Yatsenyuk, has now announced that the Government will submit a draft law to the Parliament on a referendum on national unity, territorial integrity and decentralization, to be held on 25 May together with the presidential elections. He again stressed that decentralization would grant, in certain territories, additional guarantees to the Russian-speaking population, as well as to members of ethnic minorities.

But I guess that people in eastern and southern Ukraine do not really know that such initiatives even exist, because an aggressive propaganda machine has drowned out the voice of Kyiv, with its alternative narrative of Ukraine's demonization. They simply will not be allowed to know that viable alternatives exist to the path of war, because that is not in the plans of those who cannot wait to disrupt the 25 May elections and proceed with Ukraine's dismemberment, under false referendums, the so-called "will of the people" or any sham pretext still in use by pro-Russian militants and their State sponsors. And we must very carefully watch on 11 May, when the self-proclaimed so-called "people's mayor" of Donetsk republic is demanding a new referendum be held. I would not be surprised if another request to join Russia follows after that referendum.

My Government condemns all attempts to destroy Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and firmly rejects all Russian attempts to validate its intentions and threats to use armed forces or to send Russian Federation peacekeepers into Ukraine's territory.

A couple of days ago, we expressed support for the Secretary-General's initiatives and called for stepping up international mediation efforts. We now welcome the fact that Under-Secretary-General Feltman will be going to the region. We fully stand behind the efforts to de-escalate the situation. We also think, as the representative of Luxembourg has stated, that the international observers who are there to provide unbiased, objective information must be allowed to work across all of Ukraine's territory, in order to help us all better understand what is happening there, but also to help in de-escalating the situation before it becomes much worse.

The international community must mobilize to prevent the crisis from turning into a real bloodbath. For we have seen, time and again, how deadly, horrifying and inhuman the results of incitement and demonizing the other can be. We have seen it in South Sudan, in the Central African Republic and elsewhere. In a tragic twist of irony, in the middle of Europe two sisterly nations, two Slavic Orthodox nations, may start killing each other, both victims of ruthless manipulation through propaganda, orchestrated by the Kremlin. The Geneva statement is the only thing we have on the table now. We should go back to it. We hae to let it work. It is in the interests of all of us.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): I want to thank you, Madam President, for accepting to shepherd the Security Council in the month of May. My delegation wishes you green pastures.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman for his update.

The delicate nature of the situation in Ukraine impels us to urge great circumspection by the contending parties in order to avoid a degeneration of the crisis into full-blown military confrontation. That consideration is even more pertinent today, as developments on the ground have assumed an anarchical dimension. The reported downing of two Ukrainian military helicopters yesterday and the seizure of a local railway control centre near Donetsk by unidentified armed groups amplify our concerns. The brazen takeover and control of public establishments by armed groups has led to the recent response by the Government of Ukraine. We acknowledge the responsibility of the Government to maintain public order and the rule of law. It is also possible to restore public order in a measured manner to avoid degeneration into a full-blown conflict.

Our call on all parties to de-escalate tensions could not be more urgent. We reiterate our position that the outcome of the Geneva meeting of 17 April among Ukraine, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United States provides the path to the resolution of the conflict. There are, however, prerequisites to that. All sides must refrain from violence, intimidation or provocative action. All armed groups must disarm and vacate illegally seized buildings.

The doors to a diplomatic solution must remain open. The international community, including the United Nations and the relevant regional organizations, must remain engaged and committed to finding a peaceful solution that takes into consideration the interests of all people of Ukraine. We would like to see Ukraine return to peace, security and stability, and its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity respected in accordance with the Charter of United Nations.

The alternative would resemble falling dominoes — not only in the region but in every other region in the world. Perhaps we should all study the domino theory. We would be mortified by what we saw. The current scenario is for us simply mortifying. It is our collective responsibility to prevent the domino theory from being replayed out in our times.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): We would also like to congratulate the Republic of Korea on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We thank the delegation of Nigeria for all its work as President of the Council last month. And we thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, for his briefing.

Jordan would like to express its deep concern about the most recent developments in Sloviansk in the east of Ukraine, in addition to the spillover violence in other regions of the country, including in Odessa. We call upon all parties to demonstrate restraint. We call for a return to calm and for de-escalation and full cooperation with the monitors affiliated with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We reiterate our appeal for the release of all hostages held by rebels in Sloviansk, including the OSCE monitors.

What is happening today in the east of Ukraine is not civil war, but rather a mutiny. The actions of the rebels, including the ongoing occupation of seized Government buildings, the use of force, the intimidation of civilians and threats to their life and security, are in violation of the law. As Mr. Feltman said, the continuation of those actions runs counter to the letter and spirit of the Geneva agreement signed in April. We reaffirm Ukraine's right to take appropriate and effective measures to halt violations in the eastern part of the country, preserve its unity and sovereignty, safeguard the security of its citizens and uphold constitutional and legal order.

At the same time, we call upon the Ukrainian Government to work towards a peaceful solution to the crisis and respect international norms in dealing with the situation. It is important to uphold the relevant human rights principles and to spare no effort in immediately engaging in dialogue with stakeholders to reach a peaceful solution. We must not lose the opportunity brought about by the Geneva agreement, which is a guarantee for calm in the east of the country and for preserving the territorial unity of Ukraine. We appeal to the stakeholders to implement the agreement and bring pressure to bear on the rebels to end the crisis.

Rebels and all active stakeholders in Ukraine should refrain from racist or hate speech. There is a need to guarantee a return to stability in the country. We call upon all players to help the Ukrainian authorities in their efforts to guarantee success on the political transition process and to start a comprehensive and direct dialogue with all linguistic groups.

Finally, we underscore the importance of respecting the legitimate aspirations of the Ukrainian people and of working tirelessly to ensure that presidential elections

are held within the set time frame in May, in line with those aspirations and while ensuring the future that Ukrainian citizens deserve, within the framework of a comprehensive, effective and lasting political process.

Mr. Barros (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to congratulate the delegation of the Republic of Korea on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We would like to reiterate our commitment to providing ongoing support towards the success of its stewardship. We also thank the delegation of Nigeria for its excellent work in the presidency during the month of April.

We value the briefing by Under-Secretary-General Feltman.

Since the Council last met to discuss the situation in Ukraine (see S/PV.7165), just three days ago, the crisis has escalated and, once again, we see acts of violence involving separatist groups. The crisis is very quickly entering a dangerous and unpredictable phase. We regret that turn of events and we would like to express our deep concern at the recent events in Sloviansk that had fatal consequences.

The Council must contribute to generating maximum restraint and moderation from the parties. We reiterate our call upon all parties to use all means conducive to finding a peaceful settlement of the crisis through inclusive political dialogue. It is also extremely important that parties focus on a peaceful way out of the crisis through direct political dialogue, that they refrain from acting unilaterally and that they support international mediation efforts, in keeping with General Assembly resolution 68/262. In that context, we reiterate our condemnation of the kidnapping of observers affiliated with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and we reiterate our call for them to be released immediately and without conditions.

Now more than ever, it is vital to work in a spirit of compromise like that which we saw during the Geneva talks on 17 April, which then led to the joint declaration of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Ukraine and the European Union. That agreement lays out specific steps for reducing tensions and restoring security for all citizens, such as, inter alia, refraining from the use of violence or intimidation, the disarmament of armed groups and the handover of illegally occupied buildings. Once again, we reiterate the need for respecting the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Similarly, we reaffirm the responsibility incumbent on States Members of the United Nations to show restraint in the use of force or the threat thereof against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State.

Chile believes that it is necessary to strengthen the possibilities for a diplomatic solution to be found. To that end, we support the efforts of the Secretary-General and, in particular, we welcome the visit of Under-Secretary-General Feltman to Ukraine and Russia, which at this time Chile believes is the top priority. Chile also believes any further escalation of the crisis should be avoided by entering into dialogue and through confidence-building measures, with a view to contributing to the establishment of an environment conducive to the holding of presidential elections on 25 May.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): I also thank Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his briefing.

The situation in Ukraine has further deteriorated in the past few hours. Ukrainian forces have launched operations against the separatist militants in the eastern part of the city of Sloviansk. The rebels have continued to seize public building in cities in eastern Ukraine, mainly in Sloviansk and Donetsk, where the Prosecutor's office is even occupied by the militants. They even shot down two Ukrainian helicopters on Friday, killing two crew members. In the meantime, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) military observers are still being illegally detained by separatist militants. We are of course deeply concerned by all those developments, which further deteriorate the already delicate situation in eastern Ukraine. We strongly condemn the violent methods used by armed separatists and we call for a proportionate response by the Ukrainian forces.

However, we should put our full support behind the good offices of the Secretary-General in resolving the crisis in Ukraine. We are happy to hear that Mr. Jeffrey Feltman is going to Ukraine and Moscow. I call upon all Council members to trust him, to trust his envoys and to give them the means and the political backing necessary to conduct a meaningful mediation in Ukraine and the region.

The strongest condemnation of Rwanda or of any other Council member on the deterioration of the crisis will not solve the Ukrainian conflict. We all know that

only a genuine dialogue by the Ukrainian parties, on the basis of the 17 April Geneva outcome, and a strong commitment on the part of of those who have influence on them, who need to ensure that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine are preserved, can solve this crisis. Otherwise, the situation will further escalate, the conflict will become regional, or worse, and it would be useless to continue to convene emergency public briefings of the Security Council if the concerned parties and countries are not willing to be responsible and solve the conflict. In that regard, we need to scale down the rhetoric.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Republic of Korea.

I thank the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, for his briefing.

The Republic of Korea is deeply concerned about the continuing tensions in eastern Ukraine. Despite the agreement reached in Geneva on 17 April, the situation in Ukraine is showing no signs of abating. We are particularly alarmed by the fresh violence that erupted in Sloviansk over night, including violent attacks targeting two Government helicopters by illegal armed groups. We strongly condemn those attacks, which resulted in the death of two Ukrainians. Such instances point to a serious deterioration in the situation. All provocative actions and hostile rhetoric aimed at destabilizing Ukraine must cease immediately.

In the light of the ongoing situation in Ukraine, we reiterate that constructive dialogue among all concerned parties will be the only way to achieve a peaceful solution. In that regard, we call for all parties to the Geneva statement to implement their commitments. We also fully support the Secretary-General's good offices and diplomatic initiatives. We hope that Under-Secretary-General Feltman's upcoming visit to Ukraine and Russia will contribute to a de-escalating of tensions on the ground.

With the important elections scheduled in May, it is still all the more important to ensure the environment is conducive to fair and free elections in the country without any intervention or influence by outside forces. We hope that the Ukrainian Government will lead a inclusive and transparent constitutional process.

We once again reaffirm our full support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

I resume now my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Pavlichenko (Ukraine): Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. We wish you every success in fulfilling that duty. We also want to thank the Nigerian delegation for its successful presidency last month. I would also like to extend our thanks to the Security Council delegations for their support of, and solidarity with, the Government and the people of Ukraine. I also thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing today.

Ukraine remains committed to the implementation of the agreements reached at the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Ukraine, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United States in Geneva on 17 April. Free and fair presidential elections on 25 May remain a top priority of the Government of Ukraine.

We reject all attempts by Russia to blame the Government of Ukraine for allegedly failing to implement the agreements. We wouldl ike to say that, despite numerous calls by the international community, the Russian Federation has made no efforts to de-escalate the situation and implement the Geneva agreement. Instead, Russia strongly supports illegal militant groups operating in the eastern region of Ukraine, endangering civilians, seizing hostages and creating an atmosphere of terror and violence.

Security, as well as the protection of the rights and fundamental freedoms of all the people of Ukraine, remains a top priority for the Government of Ukraine. Therefore, the purpose of the counter-terrorist operation, the active phase of which has been renewed in Sloviansk, is to isolate illegal militants from the civilian population of the city. The commander of the counter-terrorist operation has ordered the heavily armed illegal militants to immediately free all hostages, including monitors of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, to evacuate all seized administrative buildings and to stop the violence and massacres. The Ukrainian authorities are ready to provide amnesty to all those members of militant groups who have not committed serious crimes. Inclusive political dialogue with peaceful protesters remains a top priority for the Ukrainian Government.

We officially state that no tanks or missiles are used against civilians. Russian statements about the

participation of non-governmental armed groups in the counter-terrorist operation are not true. Russian statements as to the involvement of English-speaking foreigners are absolutely cynical and false. We officially state that the only foreign military personnel in eastern Ukraine are Russian saboteurs and mercenaries.

The Ukrainian side, as well as the Russian Embassy in Kyiv, was not duly informed about today's arrival in Ukraine of Vladimir Lukin, the so-called representative of the Russian President whose mission is, as he says, to contribute to the liberation of the hostages taken in eastern Ukraine. Despite the circumstances of Mr. Lukin's arrival, and taking into account the highest priority that the Ukrainian Government attaches to the release of all hostages held by illegal militants, we are ready to discuss with Mr. Lukin, as with other interested mediators, his practical contribution in order to resolve the problem.

I would like to remind the Council that, due to the particularly dangerous situation in Sloviansk, in accordance with our 2003 law on combating terrorism, Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council has taken the decision to launch a large-scale counter-terrorism operation. Owing to increasing threats to the civilian population, this morning the active phase of that counter-terrorism operation was renewed in the area of the cities of Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, where units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the National Guard and the Ukrainian Border Service were engaged. The counter-terrorist operation is being implemented exclusively by the law-enforcement agencies of Ukraine.

At the moment, nine terrorist checkpoints have been taken under the control of Ukrainian law-enforcement agencies in Sloviansk. The illegal militants, many of whom are foreign mercenaries, are using heavy firearms against the Ukrainian special forces. They have shot down two Ukrainian helicopters with rocket-propelled grenades, man-portable air defence system guided missiles and anti-aircraft guns. Two officers have been killed and seven wounded. The terrorists do not hesitate to use members of the local peaceful population as human shields. The brutal tactic of firing from residential buildings is used widely in Sloviansk by the terrorists, who are very well aware of the Government instructions to its law-enforcement agents not to answer fire coming from residential buildings.

I would also like to mention that this evening there were also attempts to break through the State border by groups of armed Russian saboteurs, who were stopped by our guards. That is why we call on our Russian partners to immediately stop supporting all the illegal militants on Ukraine's territory and other actions aimed at undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of my country.

In conclusion, I would like to cite the statement made today by Mr. Oleksandr Turchynov, Acting President of Ukraine. He said that Ukraine demands that terrorist saboteurs and all those who have taken up arms in our country lay down their weapons and surrender their hostages and occupied administrative buildings. Those who lay down their arms and are not involved in serious crimes will be given amnesty, but those accused of murder and torture will be punished. Ukraine, he said, would secure peace and stability in spite of all the efforts to organize acts provocation and unrest aimed at destabilizing the situation in the east and and south of the country, particularly in Kharkiv and Odessa. He said that he would also like to appeal to the leadership of the Russian Federation to end the hysteria about the events taking place in Ukraine and to cease its threats and intimidation. If it is concerned about violations of citizens' rights, it should protect them in its own country, where human rights are systematically violated. He also called on Russia to end its acts of provocation against Ukraine and to refrain from using terrorism, sabotage and military threats as a form of pressure on it. Despite all the problems and opposition, he said, peace would be ensured in Ukraine and the terrorist threat in eastern Ukraine would be stopped.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation, who has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Our encyclopedically educated and eloquent French colleague inserted an interesting quotation in his statement, to the effect that when we sin, it is only the first step that carries a cost, and the subsequent ones are easier. Indeed, we can find affirmations of his words of wisdom in the history of the still young twenty-first century. Among other things, the twenty-first century has presented humankind and international relations with the gift of practices such as enforced regime change, done in an attempt to impose someone's geopolitical vision on other countries of the world. It is very clear that every such attempt launched early in the twenty-first century has resulted in terrible

destabilization. But, having taken that first step, the people who made those attempts have nonetheless been unable to stop and have gone on with them. This time that has led to serious destabilization in Ukraine.

I would like to remind the Council that, during the several months of crises preceding the overthrow of the lawful administration between 21 and 25 February, our Western colleagues never once called for a halt to the violence perpetrated in Kyiv and other regions of Ukraine against the lawful authorities. There were no calls to President Yanukovych to use every possible means at his disposal as lawful President, including that of force, in order to impose order in the country. But now, for some reason, those calls are coming loud and clear.

During this entire crisis, Russia has wanted only one thing, which is to avoid destabilization in Ukraine and settle everything through negotiations. We proposed tripartite talks among Ukraine, the European Union and Russia at the start of the crisis on the political confrontation that focused on whether Ukraine should sign an association agreement with the European Union. For some reason, the European Union, with the support of the United States, rejected our proposal. When the 25 February agreement was reached, we supported it. We still believe that many of the 25 February positions are right, and that they must be kept to if we hope to bring Ukraine out of political crisis. We helped to conclude the 17 April Geneva agreement. It is a simple agreement, but it points to a way out of the crisis in the country. The one thing that is essential is that the agreement be fulfilled.

But the most striking and infuriating thing is that the demands of the people of eastern Ukraine are basically fairly simple. Finding themselves in a situation in which the nation's capital was occupied by an illegitimate authority, to a large degree consisting of hostile nationalist radical elements, the people asked that their rights be guaranteed. They demanded federalization. It was noticeable that for a long period — almost two months after the overthrow of the lawful Government — no one there took up arms for at least a couple of months. They were all waiting for some constructive reaction from Kyiv to their demands for protecting their own interests. Not once did any kind of reasonable reaction or serious initiative emanate from Kyiv. Today some of our colleagues spoke approvingly of the most recent — today or yesterday — pronouncement of Mr. Yatsenyuk, in which he talked about 25 May, for which presidential elections are scheduled, and that there will be some kind of poll on decentralization of the country. A poll. The people have been fighting on the barricades for weeks, and they think they have to conduct a poll in order to figure out people's opinion about what they want.

What bothered me more than anything today was how calmly and approvingly our Western colleagues spoke about the search operations that the Kyiv authorities are now carrying out in eastern Ukraine. They gave the impression that they know what the Kyiv authorities are thinking, what their plans are. Maybe they had a part in drawing up those plans, and that was why they talked about what was going on so calmly. Perhaps that should not be so surprising after all, because, as we know, every visit to Kyiv by senior American officials has resulted in events reaching new levels of confrontation, and a more violent turn of events. In that regard, it is not surprising that the United States, as I said in my statement, did not want the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to do as it was supposed to under the Vienna Document, that is, to bring about dialogue and organize a round table with representative of different regions and the Kyiv Government. Why did the United States not want the OSCE to do that?

Throughout the crisis, Russia several times has suggested different formats for the organization of such dialogue between the Government and opposition forces and regions. The Government did not want to or could not do it themselves. We suggested a constitutional assembly be convened. They said they were not ready to do so.

When the meeting of 17 April was organized, we suggested that representatives of the regions should be included, and that the four parties — the European Union, the United States and Russia and the acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine — could start those talks. But that proposal was rejected. The OSCE was then given the mandate, which it tried to carry out only then to be told it should not. Instead, tanks were brought out to Sloviansk and other cities in the east of the country.

Regarding what one colleague said, that Russia is refusing to implement the 17 April Geneva statement, I would repeat that Russia would never refuse to implement any useful document agreed upon during the crisis, including the 21 February agreement.

Actually listening to my statement today, one would notice that the political components were quotations from the 17 April document. If we are truly intent on finding a political solution to the crisis in spite of the dramatic events of recent days, then perhaps we might ask the President, the Permanent Representative of Korea, to make a statement following this meeting, stating that the Security Council, in keeping with the 17 April Geneva statement, calls for a swift halt to the violence, including, of course, the use of force in eastern Ukraine, and appeals for the swift and comprehensive implementation of the Geneva statement. If other members would be ready to support such action, then we would too.

The President: The representative of the United States has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I would just like to offer a couple of points in response.

First, for the Russians to blame Ukraine for Ukraine's actions in defence of its own people on its own territory really is starting to remind me of the story of the schoolboy who returned home with his nose bloody and his shirt torn and, asked by his mother how the fight started, he said "it started when the other boy hit me back". We have to be clear about cause and effect here, and many Council members, including me, have already gone through the facts that have brought us to this point.

My second point is to debunk yet another of the lies that have been told in this Ch mber, because it relates to my country, the United States. People in this Chamber have heard many times, including just now, that the United States and other countries never called oon protesters in the Maidan to leave buildings or avoid violence. The implication is that we are holding Russian separatists to a different standard. That is a claim that has been made in almost every meeting we have had. I would just like to correct the record. On 15 January, we condemned the actions of rioters outside a Kyiv court building on 10 January. On 22 January, the aggressive actions of members of the extreme-right group Pravy Sektor were unacceptable, enflaming conditions on the streets and undermining the efforts of peaceful protesters. We condemned the targeted attacks against journalists and unofficial groups such as Titushky. On 24 January, when protesters occupied some regional administration buildings, we reiterated our call for all protesters and Government forces to refrain from violence and the destruction of property. On 27 January, we made clear that we condemned the use of violence to seize Government buildings, such as the takeover of a Ministry of Justice building that took place over the past cople of days and of a public exhibition hall that weekend, and continued to reiterate our call for all protesters and Government forces to refrain from violence and the destruction of property. Those are just a few of the statements that we made, but if we could just take that particular lie of the table, it would be helpful and a little more constructive.

What is more important now is where we go from here. What I would ask my Russian colleague is whether Russia will make public statements and work privately behind the scenes to urge Russian separatists to negotiate peacefully their departure from public buildings. Where does Russia assess that Russian separatists who claim loyalty to the Russian Government and who wear uniforms just like those of Russian soldiers obtained weapons and training capable of shooting down Ukrainian helicopters?

Finally, Russia repeatedly takes aim at the so-called illegitimate Government in Kyiv but refuses to acknowledge ever, in any meeting, that it did not embrace the 21 February agreement when it was negotiated. We have a golden opportunity on 25 May for the people of eastern Ukraine to have their voices heard, for them to choose their own leaders and for us to get to a universally legitimate Government that is respected and chosen by all of the people of Ukraine. Yet Russia will not come out in support of the elections and work with us to ensure that they take place — which would be the best way of ensuring rights, representativeness and greater autonomy for the people of eastern Ukraine.

The President: I would like to ask the representative of the Russian Federation whether his idea regarding a presidential statement in support of the Geneva statement is a formal proposal or just an idea.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I did not want to say that a lie cannot only be a distortion of facts, but also a selective interpretation of one's own position. That is what we have just heard from my American colleague. What we have heard from Washington, D.C., and the way it was heard clearly demonstrated to all — including to those in Kyiv, which is most important — that the United States looked favourably on the forceful change of power,

which did not ultimately serve the interests of the Ukrainian people.

Regarding my proposal, I do think it would be good to conclude this meeting with such a statement, not asking every delegation what it is going to declare but rather make a joint statement calling for a swift halt to all violence, including the use of military force in the east of the country, and for seriously taking up the full implementation of the Geneva document.

The President: I will ask our coordinators to consider the proposal made by the representative of the Russian Federation and to work on it.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.50 p.m.